

Freshwater Extraction

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Of great concern to the public is the privatization of drinking water for profit. In 2018, over 80k public comments came out against Nestle's increase in fresh water extraction.¹ These massive water withdrawals cost almost nothing for the company, but hold significant impacts for communities and create unnecessary plastic waste through the use of disposable plastic water bottles. Under the Snyder Administration, Nestle was able to increase its extraction rate three times while circumventing strict bottled water laws.

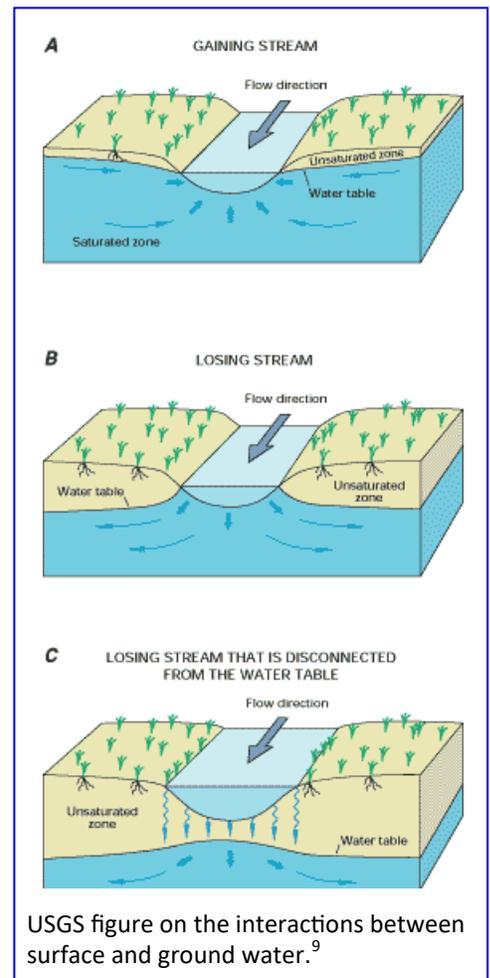
Economy	◆ Nestle pays \$3.50 for every thousand gallons it extracts. ⁸ The permit for extracting 400 gallons of water per minute costs \$200 dollars a year and a one time \$5000 fee for EGLE monitoring. In a single year, Nestle extracts more than 130 million gallons of fresh Michigan water. ²
Public Health	◆ The extraction of fresh water alters the flow of stream and river beds. Specific impacts on a body of water depend on the local geology. ⁹ Impacts range from lower stream levels to increases risks of flooding to lower areas. ◆ Fresh clean drinking water is vital to life. Life cannot be sustained without it.
Natural Resources	◆ Fresh water extraction directly impacts fresh water fisheries which impairs recreational income and Tribal livelihoods. ^{3,4}

The Case of Evert, MI

A unanimous decision by a Michigan Court of Appeals ruled that bottling water for profit is not an essential public service, following a lawsuit between Nestle and Osceola Township.⁷ Nestle extracts freshwater from a wellhead in Evert at 218 gallons per minute (gpm).⁶ The local zoning board unanimously rejected an application for infrastructure to house the companies proposed increase to 400 gpm.⁵ A public hearing regarding the decision was heavily attended, mostly from residents concerned about the depletion of their water supply as well as activists from Flint and Detroit.

Proposed Solutions

1. Raise the permit cost for excessive freshwater extraction.
2. Add strong consumer protections to prevent Michigan water from going on sale to the highest bidder.
3. Prevent EGLE from circumventing stringent bottled water rules and regulations under Section 17 of SWDA and Section 32723 of the GLPA and uphold the 3 strikes and you are out rule.¹⁰
4. Uphold and honor the 1836 Treaty with Ottawa/Chippewa tribes that it is the duty of the State of Michigan to preserve habitat vital to tribal livelihoods health and welfare.



Key Resources

[USGS Groundwater Surface-water Interactions](http://www.water.usgs.gov/ogw/gwsw.html)

[Michigan Citizens for Water Conservation](http://www.savemiwater.org)

[FLOW: For the Love of Water](http://www.florforwater.org)

www.water.usgs.gov/ogw/gwsw.html

www.savemiwater.org

www.florforwater.org

¹ “Michigan OKs Nestle Water Extraction Despite 80K+ Public Comments Against It” *NPR*, April 2018, <https://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2018/04/03/599207550/michigan-oks-nestl-water-extraction-despite-over-80k-public-comments-against-it>

² “Nestle Pays \$200 for 130 Million Gallons of Fresh Water Extraction” *Fortune Magazine*, June 2017, <https://fortune.com/2017/06/01/nestle-michigan-well-bottled-water/>

³ “Michigan Citizens, Tribes Challenge State Permit for Nestle Water Grab” *FLOW (For the Love of Water)*, May 2019, <http://flowforwater.org/michigan-citizens-tribe-challenge-state-permit-nestles-water-grab/>

⁴ Peter Gleick “Transitions to Freshwater sustainability” *PNAS (Proceedings of National Academy of Sciences of United States of America)* Sept. 4, 2018 Vol 115(36) pgs. 8863-8871

⁵ “Where Nestle Guzzles Water Michigan Neighbors Take Exception” *New York Times*, May 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/24/business/nestle-michigan-water.html>

⁶ Nancy Kaffer “Nestle Wants More Michigan Water” *Detroit Free Press*, March 7 2017, <https://www.freep.com/story/opinion/columnists/nancy-kaffer/2017/03/07/nestle-michigan-water/98696462/>

⁷ “Michigan township wins appeal in Nestle water zoning lawsuit” *Mlive*, December 2019 <https://www.mlive.com/news/2019/12/michigan-township-wins-appeal-in-nestle-water-zoning-lawsuit.html>

⁸ “For a small town battling Nestle, Michigan’s permit doesn’t end water saga” *Mlive*, May 2 2018 <https://www.bridgemi.com/michigan-environment-watch/small-town-battling-nestle-michigans-permit-doesnt-end-water-saga>

⁹ “Effects of Ground-Water Development On Ground-Water Flow To And From Surface-Water Bodies” *USGS*, https://pubs.usgs.gov/circ/circ1186/html/gw_effect.html

¹⁰ “Michigan Citizens, Tribe Challenge State Permit for Nestle’s Water Grab” *For the Love of Water*, May 2019 <http://flowforwater.org/michigan-citizens-tribe-challenge-state-permit-nestles-water-grab/>